

LIGHT FROM DARKNESS: A SHORT HISTORY OF THE 67TH NETWORK WARFARE WING

In the early days of the twentieth century, the U.S. Army Signal Corps Aeronautical Division pioneered a new technology in communications designed to provide ground commanders with visual observation and intelligence looking deep into enemy lines. This new technology was the airplane and from it came an entirely new dimension in warfare to be fought in an entirely new Battlespace--the air. Over the course of the last century, the Air Force has led the way in transforming the traditional battlefields and oceans of military conflict, once dominated by maneuver of forces, to an air and space superiority that can detect and disrupt or destroy an enemy's command and control and forces at the point of a laser beam.

Today, nearly a century after the first U.S. military aircraft was purchased bringing the United States into that new Battlespace of the air; the Air Force brought another warfighting capability to bear in the 21st Century Battlespace of Cyber Warfare. This new warfighting capability is the Air Force's own Cyber Warriors armed with the latest computer and electronic technology designed to operate, protect, exploit, and attack computer network systems.

The members of the 67th Wing are proud that our wing, the first Information Operations Wing in the Air Force, assumed the new mission to organize, train and equip these 21st Century Cyber Warriors for network warfare. To complete the mission the wing's three groups transitioned to take up their new roles in network warfare, operations, and support thus ensuring we fulfill the wing's responsibility to the Air Force and the United States of America.

Why the 67th? It's the proven ability of the wing's members to marry technology with warfighter operations to achieve victory through the continuous implementation of new technologies assigned and executed by them. Throughout the wing's history, we were at the forefront of operations from being the only tactical reconnaissance wing in the Korean War through the employment of advanced technologies necessary in the Global War on Terror.

When the 67th Wing organized in November 1947, only its 67th Reconnaissance Group was fully operational. The entire 67th Wing was attached to the 1st Fighter Wing until inactivated in 1949. The wing activated again in February 1951 for operations in Korea. It absorbed resources of the 543d Tactical Support Group and immediately commenced combat reconnaissance operations. Wing units provided photographic coverage of enemy airfields and rail lines, with weather reconnaissance as a secondary task, during the Korean War, earning seven campaign streamers.

The wing lost its commander to combat when Col. Karl L. "Pop" Polifka was killed in action flying an F-51 that was hit by enemy fire during a visual reconnaissance mission on July 1, 1951. The wing also suffered the last Air Force combat casualty of the war when Capt. John K. Rhodes flying his RF-80 aircraft was hit by enemy fire during a mission over North Korea on Armistice Day, July 27, 1953. After the war, the wing remained in South Korea and later in Japan, to provide reconnaissance as needed. On July 1, 1957, it became the sole reconnaissance wing in the Far East, and in September 1957 added air refueling and fighter aircraft to its mission, these new tasks continuing until the wing inactivated in December 1960.

Six years later, the wing organized at Mountain Home AFB, Idaho, charged with aerial, visual, optical, electronic, thermal and radar reconnaissance. The wing added RF-4C replacement training to its mission in May 1966, and in June 1968, added tactical fighter operations with F-4Ds. This latter mission ceased in November 1970.

The wing moved to Bergstrom AFB, Texas, in 1971, but from May 15 to July 15, 1971, the wing headquarters served in a dual role for the 67 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing and the succeeding 347 Tactical Fighter Wing at Mountain Home AFB. At Bergstrom, the 67th absorbed the resources of the inactivated 75 TRW and continued the reconnaissance mission formerly handled by that wing. Wing

members maintained tactical reconnaissance mission forces capable of meeting operational commitments worldwide. They also conducted reconnaissance training of Air Force, Marines and allied RF-4C aircrews, 1982-1989, and acted as advisor to Air National Guard reconnaissance units until 1992. Additionally, the wing performed reconnaissance missions supporting the U.S. Customs Service, 1983-1992.

The 67th hosted the Tactical Air Command-sponsored worldwide tactical reconnaissance competition (Reconnaissance Air Meet or RAM) at Bergstrom in 1986, 1988 and 1990. During Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, wing personnel deployed in 1990 and 1991. The RF-4C aircrews, maintenance, and support personnel from the 12 TRS deployed to a forward location, Jan. 10 through May 12, 1991. The unit photographed enemy targets, conducted searches for SCUD and SAM sites, tracked movement of the Iraqi Republican Guard and oil slicks, and conducted overall battle damage assessment. The wing ended its flying operations in August 1992 and prepared for the closure of Bergstrom AFB the following year leading to inactivation.

However, Air Force restructuring of intelligence units and assets gave the 67th a new life. On Oct. 1, 1993, personnel of the former Air Force Intelligence Command and 693rd Intelligence Wing formed the nucleus of the Headquarters 67th Intelligence Wing or 67 IW at Kelly AFB, Texas. During a mission restructuring within Air Combat Command, the wing was redesignated as the 67th Information Operations Wing on Aug. 1, 2000. As the sole information operations wing, the wing executed 8th Air Force's global information operations mission.

Members of the wing collected, analyzed, and reported current information (weather, foreign weapons systems, friendly and enemy troop locations, etc.) from different collection sources and provided the information to the warfighter, national decision makers, and the test and acquisition community. The 67 IOW executed information operations by gaining, exploiting, and attacking adversary information and information systems while defending its own. As an integral partner on the Air Force's Battlespace awareness team, the wing's goal was to achieve Information Superiority.

Mission

The 67th Network Warfare Wing executes a new mission that includes the integrated planning and employment of military capabilities to achieve the desired effects across the interconnected analog and digital portion of the Battlespace—Air Force Network Operations. The Air Force Cyber Warrior conducts network operations through the dynamic combination of hardware, software, data and human interaction. It involves time-critical, operational-level decisions that direct configuration changes and information routing.

Headquarters Air Combat Command issued Special Order GB-94 on June 28, 2006 taking several organizational actions to create the first Network Warfare Wing in the Air Force effective July 5, 2006. The command also ordered the movement of the 26th Information Operations Group from Ramstein AB, Germany, to Kelly Field Annex, Lackland AFB, Texas, on July 5, 2006.

The wing and its three groups were redesignated as the 67th Network Warfare Wing, 67th Network Warfare Group, 26th Network Operations Group, and the 690th Network Support Group. Air Combat Command also activated the 561st Communications Squadron at Peterson AFB, Colo., on July 5, 2006 to operate one of two Integrated Network Operations and Security Centers or I-NOSC. The 83d Communications Squadron operated I-NOSC at Langley AFB, Va. Both units are assigned to the 26th Network Operations Group. The group operates and defends the Air Force network.